import of timber inter-alia depends on many factors viz. domestic and international market price, fluctuation in international currency and policies of various countries etc.

(d) and (e) Supreme Copurt has also directed that notwithstanding the closure of any saw mills or other wood-based industries pursuant to the order, the workers employed in such units will continue to be paid emoluments due and shall not be retrenched or removed from the service.

USE of Recycled Plastic Carry Bags

2622. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether use of recycled plastic carry bags to pack food is being banned;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the penalty proposed for its use?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) A proposal to prohibit the use of recycled plastic carry bags for packing or carrying foodstuffs and other related materials is under consideration of the Government. As per the statutory requirement, 60 days' time is to be given for interested parties to file their comments and objections. Taking the same into account, the final notification may be considered for publication.

(c) The proposed notification is to be issued under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the penalty provision of the same Act will apply.

Effects of Plastic Products on Health and Environment

2623. SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that plastic products are bio-non-degradable and, therefore, a menace to health and environment; and

(b) whether Government would consider a ban on the production and sale of all plastic products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir. Plastic products are non-biodegradable and, therefore, their improper disposal causes health and environmental problems.

(b) At present, there is no such proposal under the consideration of the Government.

Packing of edible material in Polythene Bags

2624. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to ban polythene bags for packing of edible materials like samosas, jalebis etc;

(b) if so, the steps taken to acquaint rural people about the dangers of such polybags; and

(c) by when it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) A proposal to prohibit the use of recycled plastic carry bags for packing or carrying foodstuffs and other related materials is under consideration of the Government. As per the statutory requirement, 60 days' time is to be given for interested parties to file their comments and objections. Taking the same into account, the issue of final notification will be considered. Steps to create general awareness about the dangers in using such plastic carry bags are being carried out through various awareness campaigns.